

changed dramatically over the years. Since the 1930's, the assessor has been a service office, not assessing property, but helping residents, businesses and public agencies better understand property matters, taxation and assisting with appeals.

Since 1996, to improve operational efficiencies while providing broader services, the Township has entered into partnerships with other governments and private agencies to coordinate and expand its youth, senior and mental health programs. Intergovernmental agreements exist between the Township and all the other 10 governmental units in Oak Park and River Forest—villages; parks; libraries; schools and the River Forest Township.

From its humble beginnings serving Oak Park's population of 3,000 residents in 1903, one hundred years later Oak Park Township has evolved into a fullservice unit of local government serving Oak Park's 53,000 residents in 2003. I congratulate Oak Park Township on their 100th birthday and know that they will continue to identify and address unmet needs in their community.

# BILL TO FACILITATE ACQUISITION OF MINERAL RIGHTS AT ROCKY FLATS

**HON. MARK UDALL**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2003*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing a bill to facilitate the acquisition by the Federal Government of mineral rights or other non-Federal interests in lands that are located within the boundaries of the Rocky Flats site in Colorado.

In the 1950's, the Federal Government bought land at Rocky Flats for the use as a production facility for nuclear-weapon components. However, the purchase did not include all the mineral rights, some of which remained in private ownership.

Production at Rocky Flats ended more than a decade ago. Since then, the Department of Energy, through its contractors, has been working to have the site cleaned up and closed.

In 2001, Congress passed legislation I sponsored with Senator Wayne Allard to guide the future of Rocky Flats. Under that legislation—the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge Act Of 2001—once the cleanup and closure are accomplished, most of the land at Rocky Flats will be transferred from the Department of Energy to the Department of the Interior and will be managed as a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The refuge act includes some provisions related to the non-Federal minerals—primarily sand and gravel—at Rocky Flats. It says “nothing in this [law] limits any valid, existing . . . mineral right” except for “such reasonable conditions on access . . . as are appropriate for the cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats and for the management of the refuge.” And it says that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DOE and Interior is to “address the impacts” mineral rights “may have on the management of the refuge, and provide strategies for resolving or mitigating these impacts.”

These provisions were included in the refuge act in order to make clear that while these

mineral rights are to be respected as private property, future development of the minerals could have adverse effects on the land, wildlife habitat, and other values of the future wildlife refuge. That is why Congress directed the agencies to consider these potential future effects and work to find ways to mitigate those impacts.

So far, however, the Energy and Interior Departments have not been able to agree on what to do about the minerals, and the MOU has not been completed.

I think the best way to handle this would be for the Federal Government to acquire the minerals. However, neither the DOE nor Interior has made this a priority, and the current budgetary situation places constraints on such acquisitions.

My bill is intended to make it more feasible for the Interior Department to acquire some or all of the minerals. It would do that by giving the Secretary of the Interior two additional methods (either instead of or in addition to purchase for cash) for completing such acquisitions—

(1) by giving “credits” that could be used instead of cash to pay for oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf; and

(2) by allowing federal lands or minerals anywhere in the country to be exchanged for the Rocky Flats minerals (under current law, such exchanges can only occur within the same state—Colorado lands/minerals for other Colorado lands/minerals).

The bill has no compulsory provisions. It does not require that any of the non-Federal interests at Rocky Flats be acquired by the government, and it does not require anyone to accept anything other than cash for any interests that the government may acquire. It would merely provide the Interior Department with new tools—in addition to those it already has—for such acquisitions.

In developing the bill, I sought and obtained technical assistance from the Interior Department. I also have given careful consideration to comments from local governments and others in Colorado, and have made revisions to earlier drafts of the legislation in response to points raised in those comments.

Mr. Speaker, this bill—the “Rocky Flats Minerals Acquisition Act”—is narrow in scope. However, I think it can assist in successful implementation of something that is very important for all Coloradans—the establishment of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. I think it deserves the support of every Member of the House.

For the information of our colleagues, here is a short outline of the bill:

## OUTLINE OF ROCKY FLATS MINERALS ACQUISITION BILL

### BACKGROUND

When the ongoing cleanup of the Rocky Flats site is completed, it will be closed and most of the site will be transferred to the Interior Department for management as a National Wildlife Refuge. Within the site's boundaries there are some privately-owned mineral rights (primarily sand and gravel). Federal acquisition of at least some of these mineral rights would further sound management of the site as a wildlife refuge. However, the current budgetary situation makes it difficult to complete such acquisition.

The purpose of the bill is to provide the Interior Department with two additional tools to assist in the acquisition of minerals rights or other non-Federal property at Rocky Flats:

(1) Authority to provide “credits” (instead of or in addition to cash) that could be used for bonus bids or royalties for mineral leases on the Outer Continental Shelf; and

(2) Authority to provide eligible BLM lands (or interests) anywhere in the country in exchange for the interests acquired at Rocky Flats (waiving the current requirement that exchanges must be within the same state).

### SECTION-BY-SECTION OUTLINE

#### Section 1—

(1) provides a short title: “Rocky Flats Minerals Acquisition Act.”

(2) includes findings regarding the status of Rocky Flats and the desirability of federal acquisition of mineral interests within its boundaries

(3) states the bill's purpose as being to facilitate acquisition of non-Federal interests at Rocky Flats by authorizing the Interior Department to use credits or interests in certain public lands, instead of or in addition to cash.

#### Section 2—

(1) authorizes the Interior Department to use appropriated funds, credits, exchanged lands or interests therein, or any combination of these, to acquire mineral interests or other non-Federal interests at Rocky Flats;

(2) defines “credits,” making clear that they can only be issued with agreement of recipient, can only be used for bonus bids or royalty payments for oil or gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf and must be used within 10 years of their issuance;

(3) specifies that while exchanges can involve BLM lands or interests in any State, only lands or interests identified as suitable for disposal under current law can be transferred to private ownership through such an exchange;

(4) provides that interests acquired by the United States under the bill will be managed as part of the wildlife refuge and cannot be developed or transferred out of Federal ownership; and specifies that the bill adds to the Interior Department's existing authority and does not reduce any authority the Department already has.

**PAYING TRIBUTE ELVA  
MARTINEZ-DRYER**

**HON. SCOTT McINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2003*

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand before this body of Congress and this nation today to pay tribute to a phenomenal athlete from my district. Elva Martinez-Dyer, a former student-athlete from Western State College, will soon be inducted into the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Hall of Fame. Her exploits on the track are legendary and I would like to recognize the hard work and determination she gave the sport.

Elva helped the track team at Western State earn nation-wide recognition, personally achieving All-American status 16 times and winning five national championships. Elva became a dominant force in the sport; she did not lose a race during her final two years at school. She was awarded the “NCAA—II Track and Field Athlete of the Year Award,” for her accomplishments and was inducted into the Colorado Sports Women's Hall of Fame. Elva currently holds three records in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference, as well as four conference championships.

All of Elva's hard work and dedication paid off, as she earned a spot on the 2000 Olympic